



Norway Census Strategy

by Geoffrey Fröberg Morris, AG®

Censuses are a count and description of the people in a country, state, county, or city on a given date. The censuses in Norway were created by the government and ecclesiastical officials for population studies and taxation purposes. In your research, you will find there are different types of censuses and “census-like” records before 1920. To search the censuses effectively, you need to know what censuses are available including some contextual knowledge to solve your research problem. This class will introduce you to the following censuses:

MANNTALLET 1663 - 66 (MALES ONLY)

It does not include incorporated cities, Finnmark, and Fron prestegjeld at all. Other areas are represented but may not be complete. The manntallet can exist in 2 copies, one created by the priest and the other created by tax authorities. The 1663/64 registered the males over the age of 12 years old. The 1666 should be a registration of all males regardless of age. The Manntallet should include name of farm, tax amount of the farm, name and age of residents, with distinction of sons or male servants.

ACCESS: Digital Archives, FamilySearch Catalog

MANNTALLET 1701 (MALES ONLY)

The manntallet of 1701 should include all males down to the age of 1 years old. It followed the same structure as the 1663 but also included a request to record the location of sons who are away from home (although it may not have always been recorded). It seems male babies under 1 were not always included. It does not include the incorporated cities, the area of Finnmark, the majority of Østlandet (Akershus, Oslo, Vestfold, Østfold, Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud, Telemark) and Agder. Land owning farmers, tenant farmers, and workers in various occupations such as sawmill workers, miners, among others are grouped together in the manntallet.

ACCESS: Digital Archives, FamilySearch Catalog,

FOLKETELLINGER (CENSUS)

The earliest census was taken in 1769. This census was for statistical purposes (numeric only). It does not have personal info, although Digitalarkivet has a name searchable database from 1769 for the people in Bergen festning. Numeric folketellinger were also done every 10th year between 1815 to 1855.

ACCESS: Digital Archives

PRE-1800 SJELEREGISTER

Although the Sjeleregister is not an official census, it is worth mentioning that some priests created a list of "all the souls" in their parish. This seems to be more common in the 1700s. See if the parish that you are interested in has them in the Digital Archives¹ by clicking on **Find source** and then typing the word **sjeleregister** into the **Text search** field on the left side of the screen. Find them in FamilySearch by doing a **keyword** search for **sjeleregister** in the FamilySearch catalog.

ACCESS: Digital Archives (172), FamilySearch Catalog (85)

1801 CENSUS

The 1801 Census is known for its rich information and is almost complete for the whole country (some farms and places are missing along with Holt prestegjeld in Aust Agder). The census date was February 1, 1801. This census used a standard form for registration which included: farm or street name, person's name, position in family, age, marital status (including which marriage), and occupation. People were registered where they had their permanent residence, not where they happened to be at the time (including sailors). The recorded age was to be listed according to their upcoming age, not based on the previous filled as we do in our culture (although not all were consistent with the rule).

Interestingly we learn some demographics from this census about the Norwegian population such as there were more women than men (92 men for 100 women), and 34% of the population was under the age of 15 with only 9% over 60 years old.

ACCESS: Digital Archives, Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.com, MyHeritage.com

GAP IN NATIONAL CENSUSES

For unknown reasons, there are no national census between 1801 and 1865. In some incorporated cities, there are censuses for 1870 and 1885. Some smaller communities did statistical censuses between 1815 and 1855. In some cases, there are preparatory lists that were created by the parish priest to support these efforts. Some of these have been microfilmed such as:

1815: Høyland, Bergen, Skånevik, Lavik, Luster

1825: Stavanger landsogn, Rennesøy, Skånevik, Kvam, Strandebarm, Manger, Lavik, Luster, Jølster, Askvoll

1835: Vegårshei, Sokndal, Stavanger landsogn, Finnås, Stord, Lavik, Jølster

1845: Vegårshei, Stord, Sokndal, Vik

1855: Vegårshei, Egersund, Hjelmeland

ACCESS: Digital Archives, FamilySearch Catalog

¹ <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/>

1865 CENSUS

The 1865 Census is considered the first comprehensive census for the entire country (although Gol in Hallingdal is missing.) This census included farm name (including tenant farms), age at the upcoming birthday, birthplace, marital status, and occupation. It even had columns religious affiliation and disabilities. The census included 2 lists, the spesiallistene (a place for recording individuals) and the hovedlistene (main list) where the information from the spesiallistene is summarized. Think of the hovedlistene as an index for the spesiallistene. The strategy to search the 1865 Census is to find a person/family on the hoved list first. From there you will see a reference to the spesiallistene where you can look up the information for individuals. A tenant farm will be listed under the main farm "moderbruket" when seen in the spesiallistene. The cities of Oslo and Bergen have alphabetical street registers for the 1865 Census. Areas known to be missing are: Gol prestegjeld, Holtålen, Nannestad, and at least 106 Specialister in Kristiania.

ACCESS: Ancestry.com, Digital Archives, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com

1870 CENSUS

This census was held on Dec. 31, 1870. It was only done in the incorporated cities, some towns, and coastal cities. The following areas are missing: Hølen (in Vestby), Hamar, Åsgårdsstrand, Stathelle, Kragerø, Farsund, Sandnes, Stavanger, Vardø, and Vadsø. The forms used for this census vary according to location. It includes person's name, birth year, birthplace, social standing, and occupation among other things. The enumeration forms were filled out by the individuals, with one list per household. The census for Oslo is organized alphabetically by street.

ACCESS: Ancestry.com, Digital Archives, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com

1875 CENSUS

The 1875 Census was taken for the entire country. Just like the 1865, the 1875 has 2 lists the spesiallisten and the hovedlisten. The spesiallisten includes the person's name, occupation, marital status, birth year and place, religious affiliation, as well as disabilities. The 1875 Census had a separate registration for sailors.

ACCESS: Ancestry.com, Digital Archives, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com

1885 CENSUS

This census was held on Dec. 31, 1885, and was only done in the incorporated cities, some towns, and coastal cities. Some smaller areas within a city may be missing. There were 2 forms one to identify Laplanders, Finns, and people of mixed nationalities and another for the general population. The forms were filled out by the head of household and gives persons names, birth year and place, social standing, and occupation. The forms for Laplanders, Finns and mixed nationalities included a column to identify the nationality of the persons parents.

ACCESS: Digital Archives

1891 CENSUS

The 1891 Census was organized using 3 forms, the personsedlene, huslister, and hovedlistene. The personsedlene included the individuals' name, position in the household, marital status, birth year and place, nationality, religious affiliation, occupation, and disabilities. Every individual was supposed to have a personsedlene filled out in their behalf. Information from the personsedlene were summarized into huslister. The huslister included everyone living in the same household. The information from the personsedlene and huslister were used to create the hovedlistene. There is a hovedlistene for every enumeration district (tellingskrets.) The 1891 Census also has a separate list for sailors.

ACCESS: Ancestry.com, Digital Archives, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com

1900 CENSUS

With the 1900 Census, the personsedlene were discontinued. They went back to using personlisten in rural areas that listed everybody in the same household or apartment. In the cities they used a personlisten for everybody in the same apartment which were used to create a list for everyone in the same apartment building. As with the 1875 and the 1891 there is a separate list in the 1900 Census for sailors. After 1900, censuses were held every 10th year.

ACCESS: Ancestry.com, Digital Archives, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com

1910 CENSUS

The 1910 Census includes just over 2.4 million individuals. It was taken on December 1, 1910. The enumeration was performed under the direction of the Central Statistics Bureau (Det Statistiske Centralbyrå). Some questions were expanded to include returning Norwegian-Americans. The census data is searchable online through multiple providers. Digital copies of the original records are not published at this time.

ACCESS: Ancestry.com, Digital Archives, MyHeritage.com, The Norwegian Historical Data Centre.